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REGIONAL AND OTHER NONSTANDARD DIALECTS OF MAJOR LANGUAGES

Barbara F. Grimes

Languages with large numbers of speakers are often used as a medium of intercommunication among speakers of other nearby languages. They are commonly called lingua francas or languages of wider communication.[1] They may or may not have official status of some kind in the countries in which they are spoken. These languages often have regional variants, or other variants used by different economic classes, castes, religions, social, or politically distinct groups. The variants may be intelligible to each other, or they may differ to the extent of being unintelligible to each other, and therefore constitute distinct but related languages.[2]

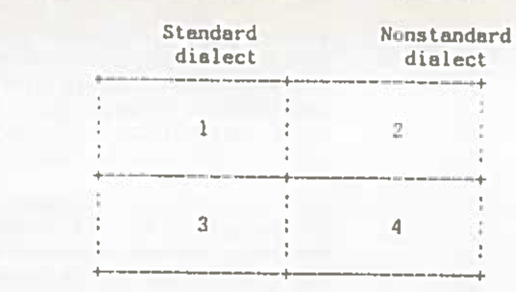
One form of the language (that is, one dialect) is often considered to be the standard form appropriate for literary purposes, for education, or sometimes for official or religious use. There has been a tendency to think only in terms of the standard form of these dominant languages. The other variants are commonly thought of as dialects, even though some may be distinct enough from the standard form or from each other to be separate languages.

These major languages usually have first language speakers as well as second language speakers,[3] although some lingua francas do not have native speakers, but only second language users. First language speakers of a regional or other variant of the language, however, sometimes have difficulty understanding or using the standard dialect of the language, depending on the degree to which the nonstandard variant differs from the standard dialect, and on how well they have learned the standard dialect.[4]

Second language users of a regional or other nonstandard variety of the language may be expected to have even more difficulty with the standard dialect of the language than first language speakers who use that same nonstandard variety, unless the bilingual proficiency of the second language user is equal to that of the native speaker.

Literature, including the Scriptures, is usually written only in the standard form of the language, often even in a special literary dialect of the standard language that may be a 'high' form even more difficult for speakers of nonstandard varieties of the language to use. Along with this there is often resistance to any attempt to produce such literature in one of the nonstandard varieties of the language.

The result of all of this is for speakers of the standard variety and other outsiders to gloss over differences between the nonstandard and standard dialects, with the further result of cutting off speakers of the nonstandard dialects from much participation in the society or from adequate access to written materials. Or, if the differences are noticed, speakers of nonstandard dialects may be treated as inferior in some way. They are assumed to know or expected to learn the standard form even though they may not have adequate means of doing so.



	Standard dialect	Nonstandard dialect
First language speakers	1	2
Second language speakers	3	4

Figure 1. Relative difficulty for different speaker groups of using standard dialect, typeical case: 1 (least difficult) to 4 (most difficult).

Figure 1 shows the four speaker groups that may be relevant in any major language situation with respect to speakers of the standard versus the nonstandard dialects, and the relationship to those of first versus second language speakers. It also shows the comparative difficulty with which speakers from the four groups can be expected to use the standard dialect in a typical case.

Note that the degree of difficulty depends on

1. The degree of difference between the dialects
2. The level of proficiency of the second language speaker

In the case of a first language speaker of a highly divergent nonstandard dialect versus a proficient second language speaker of the standard dialect, the former could have greater difficulty using the standard dialect than the latter.

SPECIFIC CASES

In order to understand the extent of these problems, thirteen specific cases will be described briefly, although there are many more examples that could be cited from all over the world.[5]

Malay

Many varieties of Malay are spoken in different regions of Malaysia, Indonesia, and southern Thailand.' Some of these differ considerably from Standard Malay, called 'Bahasa Malaysia' or 'Bahasa Malayu', which is the national language of Malaysia, and is centered in West Malaysia. Differences with Standard Malay may be as great as 80% lexical similarity, which is considered by some linguists to be borderline between language and dialect, and is in the range of marginal intelligibility.[6]

Sabah Malay is the lingua franca used in Sabah, East Malaysia. It is one of the dialects of Malay commonly referred to as 'Bazaar Malay', 'Malayu Pasar', 'Malayu Pasir', 'Market Malay', 'Trade Malay', or 'Low Malay'. There are syntactic, lexical, and pronunciation differences with Standard Malay. There may be a few native speakers of Sabah Malay, but most speakers use it as their second language. Almost the only contact that people in Sabah have with Standard Malay is in school or in some mass media communications; therefore many people are not familiar with vocabulary or other features of Standard Malay not used in school but used in other situations. There are varying levels of proficiency in it from person to person, depending on whether or not they have been to school, and on the level of schooling completed. Sabah Malay is used instead of Standard Malay for intercommunication between speakers of different languages and especially in urban centers or in linguistically mixed marriages. Educated speakers report that users of Sabah Malay who have not been to school have very little understanding of Standard Malay. They also report that Sabah Malay is closer linguistically to Standard Indonesian than it is to Standard Malay. Some churches use the Indonesian Bible, but there are political pressures within Malaysia against using written materials in Indonesian.

Both Sabah Malay and Standard Malay are commonly referred to simply as 'Malay', without distinction in conversation and in some reports, thus obscuring the lack of intelligibility between them, the different classes of situations, or domains[7] in which each is used, the resulting vocabulary and other limitations of the users, and the different degrees of bilingual proficiency in each form of Malay among individual speakers within the language community.

There are other Malay dialects spoken in Malaysia, such as **Sarawak Malay** spoken in Sarawak, north Borneo; **Baba Malay**[8] spoken by people of Chinese descent and centered near the Malacca Straits, East Malaysia; **Cocos Island Malay** spoken in Lahad Datu and Tawau in southeastern Sabah; **Brunei-Kedayan** spoken in northeastern Borneo; and **Trengganu Malay** spoken in the northeastern Malayan peninsula. Many or all of these are distinct enough from Standard Malay that they may be only marginally intelligible with it.

Pattani Malay is spoken on the east coast of south Thailand below Songkhia, Yala to Suratthani, and also in West Malaysia.

Standard Malay, but similar to the variety of Malay spoken in Kelantan and Trengganu States in Malaysia. The New Testament is in print and Old Testament translation is in progress in Pattani Malay.[9]

Indonesian

Indonesian is a variety of Malay reported to be based on Riau Malay in Sumatra, one of several indigenous Malay dialects spoken in Sumatra.[10] It has about 80% lexical similarity with Standard Malay of Malaysia,[11] and is the national language of Indonesia. Standard Indonesian is defined by the National Language Center in Jakarta. The sociolinguistic situation of Standard Indonesian within Indonesia is similar to that of Standard Malay within Malaysia.

Perhaps the most divergent form of Malay spoken in Indonesia is **Ambonese Malay**, which is used in most of central and southern Maluku[12] in east central Indonesia, and has 81% lexical similarity with Standard Indonesian.[13] Ambonese Malay seems to have developed from Trade Malay and still reflects some archaic forms. It further diverged by adapting to the syntax and morphology of the vernaculars spoken in Central Maluku.[14] Speakers of Indonesian who arrive in Ambon have great difficulty understanding the local variety, although they understand many words. There have been native speakers of Ambonese Malay for several generations; possible 100,000 persons at the present time, primarily on the islands of Ambon, Haruku, Nusa Laut, Saparua, along the coastal areas of Seram, and in southern Maluku. Some of these native speakers have not learned Indonesian and so do not understand it. The main contact with Indonesian is on the part of those who have been to school, through the media (primarily radio), and in government contacts. There are many second language users of Ambonese Malay, for whom it is their main language of wider communication. Some of them also do not know Indonesian. Churches in the area tend to use an older, stilted translation of Scripture in Indonesian, which is more difficult for speakers of Ambonese Malay to understand than it is for speakers of Indonesian. It is even more difficult to understand for second language users of Ambonese Malay who do not know Indonesian. The churches tend to resist the use of modern language Indonesian translations, which would be closer to the form of Indonesian known by local educated speakers. Those churches might resist even more having Scripture translated into the local Ambonese Malay, although it may be the best or only vehicle through which the Scriptures can be made available to many people.

Irianese Malay is another regional variety of Malay spoken in Irian Jaya, east Indonesia. It is apparently closer to Standard Indonesian than is Ambonese Malay. There may be a few native speakers of Irianese Malay, mainly the children of parents who come from different languge groups and are living in urban areas. It is the main language of wider communication in Irian Jaya, used for intercommunication among different language groups, and in some occupations such as among mine workers. Standard Indonesian is known in varying degrees only by those who have been to school. Some reports state that certain minority language groups are 'becoming more bilingual', without distinguishing whether it is in Irianese Malay or in Indonesian, whether each is used in certain domains only, or indicating the spread of different levels of bilingual proficiency in each variety in different domains and among different individuals in the minority language community. This can lead to the possibly false assumption that bilingualism in Irianese Malay can enable a person to understand Indonesian and use Indonesian literature adequately, including the Scriptures.

There are other forms of Malay used in Indonesia, such as North Moluccan Malay, Makassarese Malay, Menadonese Malay, Jakarta Malay, and others, each with varying degrees of closeness to Indonesian, and with similar sociolinguistic situations to those already described.

Javanese

Javanese is spoken primarily on the Island of Java in southwestern Indonesia, and also by recent settlers on many other islands of Indonesia by about 70,000,000 people. There are 'high' forms of Javanese which are used for formal occasions, in speeches, and for literature, including the Scriptures. Javanese has many levels of respect forms used by its speakers, depending on the relative age and social status of the person being addressed and of the speaker.

Javanese has various regional dialects, some of which are divergent enough to possibly be inherently unintelligible with it. **Tengger** is spoken in east Java by people who live on the slopes of Mt. Bromo volcano all the way up to the crater.[15] The Tengger are ethnically and linguistically distinct from other Javanese. They practice Hinduism and Buddhism, in contrast to the Javanese, who are mainly Muslim. Their dialect may be only marginally intelligible with Standard Javanese. It is not yet clear whether their communication with the surrounding Javanese culture is through dialect intelligibility or bilingualism. They are not conversant in the high forms of Standard Javanese used in literature and in special social contexts. They are, however, listed in some sources merely as a dialect of Javanese,[16] thus giving the impression that all speakers of Tengger can understand Standard Javanese adaquately.

New Caledonian Javanese is spoken in New Caledonia in the South Pacific by about 6,000 migrant workers taken there from Java primarily between 1900 and 1938. Since World War II there has been continuing migration in both directions by individuals and families. They have come primarily from the farming class in Java which is not conversant in high or literary Javanese.[17] Their dialect has been significantly influenced by French. The result is a divergent dialect, many of whose speakers may not be able to use existing Javanese literature, including Scrip-

ture. The literacy rate among Melanesian New Caledonians is 85%. It is not known what the literacy rate is among New Caledonian Javanese, or whether they would be literate only in French or also in Javanese. To become functionally literate in Javanese would also require learning the literary dialect of Javanese.

It is not known what degrees of bilingual proficiency the New Caledonian Javanese have in the official French language. They apparently have not learned other languages of New Caledonia. There are indications that young people of Javanese descent may not be learning to speak New Caledonian Javanese, although some, at least, may understand it in order to communicate with their elders. Their main language is French. New Caledonian Javanese is commonly referred to simply as 'Javanese', thus giving the impression that it is like Standard Javanese. One report indicates that the revised Javanese Bible is comprehensible to New Caledonian Javanese speakers.[18] These possible conflicting reports need to be checked in all segments of the society.

Surinam Javanese is spoken by about 60,000 people in Surinam, South America, or about 15% of the population of the country. It is spoken mainly in the northern part of the country in or near urban areas. It has been affected by borrowings from other Surinam languages. The speakers are descended from farmers brought over to work in the plantations in the 1860's and afterward. Most of them are not conversant in high or literary Javanese. Some older speakers use the Javanese Scriptures with difficulty, but young people cannot understand them. Translation of Scripture is presently in progress in this form of Javanese. Surinam Javanese is often called merely 'Javanese'.

Ilocano

Ilocano is the major lingua franca used in northern and central Luzon in the Philippines, in Mindoro, and in parts of Mindanao. There are about 5,000,000 native speakers, with many more second language users. It has no official status. There are regional dialects used by both first and second language speakers.

The Scriptures are in Standard Ilocano, which is centered in Ilocos Province in northwestern Luzon. Even the latest translations of Scripture tend to use some stilted terminology compared with ordinary speech, which makes the Scriptures difficult for first language speakers of some regional dialects to understand. There are reports that one or two other groups who are bilingual in Ilocano might be able to use Ilocano Scriptures if there were the 'right kind' of translation. However, pressures from churches that only a more formal kind of language should be used for Scripture make it unlikely that a translation adequate for bilingual speakers will be undertaken in the near future.

Portuguese

There are about 10,000,000 speakers of Portuguese in Portugal and the Azores, who speak a collection of dialects quite different from dialects of Brazil, which have over 130,000,000 first language speakers.

Galician, or Gallego, is spoken by over 3,000,000 people in Galicia Province in northwestern Spain and in the northern provinces of Entre-Minhoe-Douro and Trazos-Montes in Portugal. Galician is intermediate in a dialect chain between Portuguese and Spanish, but is often called a dialect of Portuguese.[19] It is distinct enough from either Portuguese or Spanish, however, that it should probably be treated as separate.[20] The Galicians are a 'vigorously independent people'.[21] There is a Galician Academy and an Institute of the Galician Language. The only Scripture ever published was a portion in a limited edition published in 1837 as a larger literary exercise sponsored by Prince Louis-Lucien Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon.[22]

Regional dialects of Brazilian Portuguese have varying degrees of difference from Standard Brazilian Portuguese. The Scriptures have been translated into at least two 'popular' Brazilian Portuguese versions. However, there are native speakers of various regional dialects along the Amazon River in Brazil that have difficulty understanding, or cannot understand, the modern language Brazilian Portuguese translation.[23] It is even more difficult for second language users of those regional dialects to understand Scriptures in even the modern versions.

Spanish

Spanish is spoken as a first language by over 210,000,000 people in Spain, the Americas, and elsewhere, and by many more second langauge users. There are many regional varieties, although educated Spanish speakers have little difficulty communicating with each other or using written materials in Standard Spanish, as defined by the international Academy of the Spanish Language. Uneducated, semi-educated, and especially second language speakers of some regional dialects, who speak a form of 'peasant' Spanish, have varying degrees of difficulty in understanding Standard Spanish and even the modern translations of Scripture into 'popular' Spanish. They have even more diffuculty understanding the older translations commonly used in many churches.

Italian

There are various forms of speech commonly referred to as 'dialects' of Italian, but increasingly reported to be unintelligible with Standard Italian. They are apparently called dialects of Italian because they are spoken in Italy,

are related to Italian, and because most of them have no official status. Several of these are closer to French than to Italian. Bergamasco (130,000 or more speakers), Ligurian (1,900,000 speakers), Lombard (8,600,000 speakers), Piedmontese (3,000,000 speakers) Sardinian (1,500,000 speakers), Venetian (2,100,000 speakers), Ticanese (700,000 speakers), spoken in the Ticino Canton of Switzerland, and Corsican (260,000 or more spoken in Corsica, France, are all commonly called dialects of Italian, but are probably separate languages, according to linguistic structural differences and inherent intelligibility as shown in Figure 2.[24] Bergamasco, Ligurian, Lombard, Piedmontese, Sicilian, and Venetian have been specifically reported to be very different from Standard Italian.[25] Neapolitan-Calabrese is reported to be unintelligible with Standard Italian, especially in complicated or abstract speech.[26] Sardinian is the second official language used for Sardinia. Corsican has been recognized as a separate language by the French Government.

If they are separate languages, then it is important to distinguish them from Standard Italian, to find out what degrees of bilingual proficiency speakers in different segments of each language community have in Standard Italian, or Standard French in the case of Corsican, as well as which languages are used in different areas of life. Standard Italian is generally used for education, literature, and official purposes. Older translations of Scripture have been done in some of these languages, and some translation is presently being done.

	Romance	
Italo-Western		Southern
Western	Italo-Romance	
Gallo-Romance		
French	Italian	Sardinian
Ligurian	Neapolitan-Calabrese	
Lombard	Sicilian	
Piedmontese	Venetian	
Ticanese	Corsican	
Bergamasco		

'Dialects' of Italian Compared with Italian and French.
Figure 2.

Romanian

Standard Romanian is the official language of Romania. It is called Moldavian in the USSR, where a slightly different dialect is spoken, and the cyrillic script is used. However, Istro-Romanian of Yugoslavia (150,000), Macedo-Romanian of Greece and Albania (50,000 or more), and Megleno-Romanian of Greece are quite distinct from Standard Romanian.[27] The speakers have varying degrees of bilingual proficiency in Standard Romanian or in their respective national languages; which are Serbo-Croatian or Slovenian in Yugoslavia, Greek in Greece, and Albanian in Albania. All of these forms of Romanian are commonly called Romanian dialects.

German

The situation with so-called German 'dialects' is similar to others in Europe already described. German is really a family of languages and dialects, some of which are unintelligible to each other. It has at least two branches; Upper or High German, consisting of languages and dialects in the Upper Rhine Valley, and Lower or Low German, consisting of languages and dialects in the Lower Rhine Valley, which did not experience the second consonantal shift of the 8th and 9th centuries.[28] Standard German is the High German dialect that rose to prominence after Martin Luther translated the Scriptures into his own dialect. It is used for literary and religious purposes in most German-speaking communities around the world, and for educational and official purposes in several countries.

Bavarian is commonly called a German dialect, but is quite different from Standard German. It is in the Upper German group of languages and dialects, and has three subdialects of its own; Central Bavarian in the Alps, lower Austria, and Salzburg; North Bavarian in the north of Regensburg, to Nuremburg and western Bohemia, Czechoslovakia; and South Bavarian in the Bavarian Alps, Tyrol, Styria, including the Heanzian dialect of Burgenland, Carinthia, the Sette and Tredici Communi south of Trent in northern Italy, and part of Gottschee in Yugoslavia.[29] The degree of bilingual proficiency of speakers in their respective national languages or in Standard German needs investigation.

Swiss German (Schwytzertuetsch) has over 4,000,000 speakers in Switzerland, and is actually a group of Upper German languages and dialects, some of which are not intelligible with Standard German or with each other. Swiss German is used in the home and community. Standard German is one of the official languages in Switzerland, used for educational, literary, and official purposes. It has been used traditionally for Scripture and by pastors for sermons and prayers. Apparently nearly all Swiss citizens who speak Swiss German as first language are highly bilingual in Standard German, although there are some who can understand it but not speak it; a kind of passive bilingualism.

William G. Moulton describes how speakers of diverse Swiss German dialects communicate with each other, and their attitude toward some appropriate and inappropriate uses of Standard German: [30]

> Theoretically, at least, speakers of the many different Swiss German dialects could achieve

mutual intelligibility by using Standard German ("Hochdeutsch") when they talk together. As it turns out, however, the German Swiss find this solution totally unacceptable. It would be a gross breach of linguistic etiquette for one German Swiss to use Standard German in normal conversation with another German Swiss. This is simply not done. Instead of this, each speaker speaks his own dialect, and they achieve mutual intelligibility by learning how to correlate especially the sound system of their own dialect with the often quite different sound systems of other dialects.

I remember personally a vivid example of this. During the two years (1958-59, 1964-65) when I worked in Zurich with the materials of the Linguistic Atlas of German Switzerland (cf. Hotzenkocherle 1962ff.), there were three Swiss colleagues who also worked quite regularly in the atlas office. One came from the city of Zurich, one from the city of Glarus, and one from the city of Chur--three phonologically quite different dialects. In speaking with me, a foreigner, they used Standard German, at least until I had learned a somewhat fractured type of Zurich German. In speaking with each other, however, they used only dialect, and each used his own dialect. Though none of them could actually speak either of the other two dialects, each of them could understand the other two dialects with no difficulty at all: they had learned how to make the necessary conversions. This is the typical solution for nearly all speakers of Swiss German dialects. Only in the extreme south are the local dialects so different from those to the north that the conversions are not easily made. Even here, however, southern speakers do not generally use Standard German in talking with speakers from farther north. Instead, they use a vague sort of west Swiss speech (more or less like the dialect of the city of Bern), and the northern speakers use their regular northern dialects.

Although earlier translations of Scripture into several Swiss German dialects were generally ignored, several recent translations are being used and appreciated by more people, and even used in some church services. Swiss German is used increasingly for other parts of church services, by some pastors for sermons, and for less formal lectures.[31]

Plautdietsch (possibly 300,000 speakers) is a Low German language[32] distinct from most other Low German dialects, with the largest number of speakers in Canada (100,000 or more), many speakers in Latin America (107,000 or more) and the United States (10,000 or more), as well as some in the USSR and some in the original area in Friesland, West Germany. It is spoken mainly by Mennonites, or those from a Mennonite background.

They have varying degrees of bilingual proficiency—in Standard German, which they have used for religious purposes, including for Scripture. Some speakers, including many in Latin America, do not understand Standard German, English, or Spanish, but are monolingual in Plautdietsch. Plautdietsch is used informally in the home and community, but most speakers consider it to be not dignified enough for church or Scripture. Some speakers have the opportunity to be educated in Standard German, but many do not, and so their only exposure to it is in church. For them it is a religious language that does not communicate well. However, Plautdietsch is slowly gaining acceptance as a literary vehicle. A dictionary and some serious literature have been published. It is used in some radio broadcasts, in some churches, and the New Testament is now being translated into it.

Pennsylvania German, commonly called Pennsylvania Dutch or sometimes Pennsylvanisch, may have as many as 200,000 speakers, and is spoken primarily in Pennsylvania and Ohio in the United States (possibly 200,000), and also around Kitchener and Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (10,000). There are thousands of first language speakers out of an ethnic population of several hundred thousand. It is based primarily on Rhenisch Palatinate (Pfalzer) Low German, with some influences from Standard German and English.[33] The sociolinguistic situation is similar to that of Plautdietsch, being spoken mainly by Amish and Mennonite people, who have varying degrees of bilingual proficiency in Standard German or English. Pennsylvania German is commonly thought of as 'the language of the barnyard and the country store'.[34] Some Scripture portions have been published, and further Scripture translation is being undertaken for those whose bilingual proficiency in other languages is inadequate.

Tirolean German (Hutterite German, Tyrolese) has a similar sociolinguistic situation to the last two languages described. It is an Upper German language, spoken by about 30,000 people in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, Canada, and in the United States.[35] The Hutterites practice strict communal living in colonies. They use Standard German in church and for Scriptures, but are more bilingual in English than in Standard German. The degree of difference between Tirolean and Standard High German needs to be investigated, as well as the degree of bilingual proficiency of speakers in English.

Arabic

Arabic is a family of languages with a dialect chain stretching across thirty-one countries from Afghanistan in the east to Senegal in West Africa. Contiguous dialects have varying degrees of intelligibility with each other, but a major division extends from the Egypt-Libya border diagonally down to Lake Chad.[36] Modern colloquial Arabic has changed sufficiently from the Classical Arabic in which the Koran was written, so that the latter is not intelligible to native speakers unless they have been educated extensively in it. Standard Arabic is a modern form based on Classical Arabic, and learned by

educated speakers. This varies less from country to country than regional forms of colloquial Arabic, so that educated speakers from different countries can communicate with each other, although sometimes adjustments need to be made even among them.

It is officially not permitted for the Koran, the sacred writings of Islam, to be translated into another language because of the belief that a translation by nature introduces error. The purity and truth of the content is thought to be preserved by preserving the form of the language. Standard or Classical Arabic is the only form accepted for literary purposes by most people. Some translations of the Koran have been made which are considered interpretations or commentaries on the text rather than the Koran itself. Several sources state that any attempt to produce literature, including the Christian Scriptures, in a colloquial Arabic would be ridiculed and the content would not be believed. The acceptibility of having colloquial versions is a topic provoking heated debate.

However, there are an estimated 90,000,000 illiterate first language Arabic speakers who speak possibly ten or more separate colloquial Arabic languages, based on inherent intelligibility criteria. There are also many other divergent rural dialects. These people cannot automatically understand Standard or Classical Arabic. To become functionally literate they would have to learn not only to read, but learn to speak a separate language as well. The number of years of schooling required to reach a high enough level of bilingual proficiency in a separate language to be able to understand complex and abstract concepts by means of it is not available to most of these people. This leaves them cut off from participation in their national society and from adquate access to Scripture and to the Christian message.

The Bible has been translated into Classical Arabic and North African Colloquial Arabic. The New Testament in Modern Standard Arabic is available in two versions, and Old Testament translations are in progress. The New Testament has also been translated separately into the Arabic varieties of Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Algeria, and Morocco. Other colloquial varieties are distinct enough that their uneducated speakers are unable to understand these versions.

Chinese

Chinese is commonly thought of as one language with various dialects, but linguists distinguish eight separate languages based on lack of intelligibility, grammatical and lexical differences: Gan (24,000,000), Hakka (43,000,000), Mandarin (713,000,000), South Min (Min Nan, Hokkien; 45,000,000), North Min (Min Pei; 12,000,000), Wu (84,000,000), Xiang (50,000,000), and Yue (Cantonese; 54,000,000). Mandarin is the official language in China and in most Chinese speaking countries except Hongkong, where Yue is official.

In China, the official language is used for government, university, some elementary and secondary schools, and is taught as a second language in schools where it is not used for all purposes. Mandarin speaking areas comprise 70% of the population of the country. In those areas Mandarin is used for all purposes. There is an official policy of recognizing local languages in China, so the other Chinese languages are used for schools in some areas. Local television in Shanghai uses Mandarin for official government broadcasts and news, but uses the local Wu for programs dealing with social issues like family planning, community affairs, and 'soap operas', because Wu is the language of the home and community in that part of China.

The Chinese writing system has the advantage of identifying meaningful forms independently of their sound, and so the same literature can be used for all eight Chinese languages with little adaptation. The main problem comes for Chinese speaking people in other countries, some of whom may not have the opportunity to attend Chinese schools and to learn the Chinese characters; such as the Chinese in Thailand (5,600,000), those in Indonesia (over 2,000,000), and the Dungan of the USSR (52,000; 1979 census). The Dungan speak dialects close to Standard Mandarin, and the language has official literary status in the USSR, but uses the cyrillic script. The Dungan are Muslim and use the Arabic script for religious purposes. They are not familiar with the Chinese characters, and so do not have access to the vast Chinese literature or to the Christian Scriptures.

Nepali

Nepali is spoken by possibly 16,000,000 first language speakers in Nepal (9,600,000), India (6,000,000), and Bhutan (300,000). It is the national language of Nepal. It has regional variants, as well as a difference between formal and informal dialects, which are used in the capital and elsewhere. Some of the regional variants which may be quite different are Baitadi, Doteli, Soradi, Bajhangi, Bajura, Achhami, Jumla, all in western Nepal. The formal dialect is used for literary, educational, and official purposes, and differs considerably from some of the informal and regional dialects. Speakers of these nonstandard forms have difficulty using the formal, standard variety unless they have learned it in school. The literacy rate in Nepal is 23% (1985 United Mission to Nepal), and so a large segment of the population has little or no knowledge of the formal variety. The Scriptures are available in modern language versions, but the churches generally do not accept them, considering the older, more literal and formal translations more acceptable for religious use. This cuts off many people from active use of Scripture or from being able to see its relevance to their everyday lives. The problem is more acute for minority language speakers who use a nonstandard form of Nepali as their second language.

Creoles

Creoles are languages which have usually developed from pidgin speech resulting from contact between speakers of separate languages and used as a lingua franca between them. Linguists distinguish between pidgins, which do not have native speakers, and creoles which do, and which have developed more fully than pidgins to meet the varied needs of human beings for verbal expression in every area of life. Pidgins and creoles are often based on major languages of the world, but are commonly considered to be 'butchered' forms of those languages. They are consequently held in low esteem by outsiders as well as by many native speakers.

Different creoles have varying degrees of closeness to their base language, but some are different enough to be unintelligible with them. If the base language is the national language of the country in which the creole is spoken, then the creole speakers will have varying degrees of bilingual proficiency in the base language or national language. If, however, the base language is not the national language, then the creole speakers may have no opportunity to learn the base language, and the problem is then each individual's degree of bilingual proficiency in whatever is the national language of his country, which is more distinct from the creole than is the base language. This latter is the situation with the French-based Louisiana Creole of the United States, and the Dominica Creole and St. Lucia Creole of the Caribbean, which are spoken in countries where English is the national language rather than Standard French; and with three or more English-based creoles of Central America: Limon Creole of Costa Rica, Bluefields Creole of Nicaragua, and Panamanian Creole of Panama, which are spoken in countries where Spanish is the national language rather than Standard English. These speakers usually do not have opportunity to learn to read or speak the base language of their creole.

It should be noted that two creoles with the same base language, or a creole and its base language, may be thought to be intelligible with each other by a person who knows the base language, when they are not intelligible to speakers who have not learned either the base language or the other creole. Gary and Linda Simons[37] have called attention to this for New Guinea Pidgin and Solomon Islands Pidgin, which are both English-based, are undergoing creolization, and are probably not each intelligible to monolingual speakers of the other, although they may seem to be quite similar to speakers of Standard English who compare them.

Jamaican Creole is fairly representative of Creole situations. It is spoken by about 70% of the population of Jamaica,[38] or about 1,700,000 people. There is a continuum in degree of difference from Standard British English to the extreme creole spoken more in remote areas,[39] although native speakers may not perceive things in terms of a continuum.[40] The extreme creole is not inherently intelligible with Standard English.[41] The Creole is generally considered to be a form of 'broken' English, not acceptable for use in written form, even though the population has varying degrees of bilingual proficiency in Standard English, some fairly low or with no proficiency in it. The Scriptures are available only in Standard English. However, the New Testament has recently been published in Krio of Sierra Leone in West Africa, which is spoken largely by descendents of people repatriated from Jamaica in the last century. The degree of intelligibility of Krio with Jamaican Creole has apparently not yet been evaluated.

There are creole languages spoken by millions of people in the Caribbean, in nearby areas in the southeastern United States, eastern Central America, northern South America, West Africa, Malacca in Malaysia, the Philippines, the islands of the Indian Ocean, Papua New Guinea, Australia, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and elsewhere, with similar problems to those already described. Several creole languages have been gaining prestige; examples are New Guinea Pidgin, which has official status in Papua New Guinea, Kriol of Australia, Sranantongo of Surinam, and Papiamentu in the Netherlands Antilles.

SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

The problems described for these specific languages are also shared by all or most lingua francas, languages of wider communication, and national languages throughout the world. These problems accompanying language standardization are common throughout Europe especially.[42] The common characteristics are pressures to accept only the standard dialect as liegitimate for education, literature, official use, religion, and in some cases for oral communication in higher social and educational circles; to consider those who cannot use the standard form as inferior; to overlook the limitations this places on large segments of society for communication, education, economic improvement, and meaningful use of the Scriptures; and to assume that everyone can handle both the standard and nonstandard forms because educated speakers are able to do so.

TOWARD POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Linguistic Differences

For languages where it has not already been done, studies need to be undertaken concerning the pronunciation, lexical, grammatical, and semantic differences between standard and nonstandard dialects, in order to better understand how different they are, whether they are dialects or separate languages, and the nature of the problems for native speakers who do not know the standard dialect, as well as the even greater problem for speakers of other minority languages who only know a nonstandard form of the major language as their second language.

Survey Clarifications

It is important for surveys to take note of, test, and report degrees of dialect or second language comprehension by speakers of the nonstandard dialect toward the standard dialect, the classes of situations in which the nonstandard and standard dialects are used, and language attitudes toward each separately. If the two varieties are separate languages, then testing of bilingual proficiency needs to be carried out.[43] If the two are close enough linguistically to be possible dialects, then testing needs to be done for inherent dialect intelligibility.[44] Reports should not refer to both generically by the same label, such as 'Malay', 'Nepali', 'Italian', or whatever it may be. Similarly, general statements about 'bilingualism' without clarifying which form of which language is being referred to, or what levels of bilingual proficiency are involved, cloud the issues or are even misleading.

Preparation and Promotion of Materials

Ideally, literature including Scripture will be prepared for speakers of each form of a language in which comprehension of the standard dialect is not adequate.[45] Language attitudes of both speakers and nonspeakers may be very much against this effort, and so a program of promoting the acceptance of the nonstandard form will be needed.[46] Speakers who can use the standard dialect adequately should not keep other speakers from access to materials because of their prejudices or lack of understanding of the problem.

Target audience. Materials can be labelled specifically for the audience who needs them in such a way as to not seem competitive with standard dialect materials. The Bible societies have labelled some modern language translations as 'popular versions', 'youth versions', or 'for new literates', although they are also sometimes used by others besides the limited audience indicated by the label. These more informal versions may be more understandable to speakers of several nonstandard dialects than the formal standard versions are, unless such modern language versions are prepared for one very restricted nonstandard dialect. It is reported that a translation of Scripture portions into Irianese Malay has been labelled 'simple language',[47] therefore not attempting to compete with the Standard Indonesian versions.

Oral materials. Because the nonstandard dialects are often considered to be acceptable for oral use although not for written purposes, materials can be prepared on cassette or for radio presentation as a transitional oral phase.[48] Eventually they should be published for use by those who need to study them with more care than a sound recording allows, and to preserve them for future use.

Private use. It is not possible to predict with certainty what the acceptance of materials will be, especially before a promotion effort has been carried on. However, speakers can be encouraged to use materials in their own dialect privately, even if they are not used publicly. This is especially important in the case of Scripture use, where understanding is of primary importance.[49]

CONCLUSIONS

The need for recognizing a standardized dialect of major languages has resulted in problems for users of nonstandard dialects who have not had opportunity to learn the standard dialect well, if at all. This includes native speakers of nonstandard varieties as well as second language users of those nonstandard varieties. Differences between the standard dialect and other varieties are usually minimized rather than studied, leaving users of nonstandard dialects handicapped educationally, economically, socially, politically, and often spiritually.

The extent to which the nonstandard dialect is linguistically close to the standard dialect needs to be studied and described. This will clarify the degree of difficulty and the kinds of difficulty speakers of the nonstandard dialect will have in learning the standard dialect. Similarities will aid understanding, but differences will need to be specifically taught, if second language speakers are to use the standard dialect adquately. Reports need to distinguish differences in usage in different domains, varying degrees of proficiency in each variety in the different domains, the relevant groups of society that have different proficiency. Materials should be prepared and promoted in nonstandard dialects where speaker comprehension of the standard form is not adequate. Where language attitudes may be hindrances to using materials in nonstandard dialects, the materials can be labelled for restricted audiences, and prepared for private use or oral use as transitional stages toward more widespread acceptance.

NOTES

[1]A lingua franca is a language used primarily for commercial purposes. A language of wider communication may also be used for trade as well as for other purposes between speakers of different languages.

[2]The term **language** is used in this paper to refer to a speech variety whose speakers can understand each other, but who cannot understand other speech varieties unless they learn the other variety. The term **dialect** is used to refer to subvarieties of a language whose speakers speak differently, but whose speech is similar enough that they can understand each other.

[3]First language speakers refer to persons who have learned the language as their initial language and use it as their primary means of communication, often also referred to as

mother tongue, vernacular, and native language. It is recognized that in a minority of instances there can be a difference between mother tongue and first language, in which the initial language learned is not the one used primarily at a later time. Second language speakers are persons who have learned a second language and use it with varying degrees of proficiency in certain situations.

[4]B. Grimes, 1985b.

[5]B. Grimes, 1984. Much of the background for this paper has been gathered by the author from field experience in various parts of the world during the last 33 years, as well as correspondence, interviews, and research on minority language situations in connection with compiling the Ethnologue.

[6]M. Swadesh, 1971.

[7]A domain is a class of situations in which a different style of speech, dialect, or language is used than that which is used in other classes of situations.

[8]Dede Oetomo, 1984.

[9]David Hogan, Christian Missions in Many Lands, personal communication.

[10]Charles E. Grimes, SIL, personal communication.

[11]John M. Echols, Cornell University, personal communication.

[12]C.E. Grimes, 1985; James T. Collins, 1983.

[13]I. Dyen, 1965.

[14]C. E. Grimes, personal communication.

[15]C. E. Grimes, personal communication.

[16]C. F. Voegelin and F. M. Voegelin, 1977, p. 178.

[17]Koentjaraninggrat, University of Indonesia, personal communication.

[18]Stephen Schooling, SIL, personal communication.

[19]C. F. Voegelin and F. M. Voegelin, 1977, p. 296.

[20]F. B. Agard, Cornell University, personal communication.

[21]E. A. Nida, 1972, p. 147.

[22]E. A. Nida, 1972, p. 7.

[23]Carl Harrison, SIL, personal communication.

[24]F. B. Agard, 1984, pp. 250-251.

[25]Philippe Cousson, personal communication.

[26]Brad Willits, personal communication.

[27]F. B. Agard, personal communication.

[28]J. Thiessen, University of Winnipeg, personal communication.

[29]C. F. Voegelin and F. M. Voegelin, 1977, p. 146.

[30]William G. Moulton, 1985.

[31]Dora Bieri, SIL, personal communication.

[32]J. Thiessen, 1963.

[33]E. A. Nida, 1972, p. 158.

[34]R. H. Minnich, personal communication; and 1974.

[35]V. Peters, personal communication.

[36]J. M. Cowan, Cornell University, personal communication; and M. C. Bateson, 1967.

[37]SIL, personal communication.

[38]James Miller, SIL, personal communication.

[39]Robert A. Hall, Jr., 1966.

[40]George Huttar, SIL, personal communication.

[41]C. F. Voegelin and F. M. Voegelin, 1977, p. 143.

[42]M. Stephens, 1976.

[43]B. Grimes, 1985b.

[44]E. Casad, 1974; G. Simons, 1979.

[45]B. Grimes, 1982; 1985a; and ms.

[46]B. Grimes, 1982; and John Sandefur, ms.

[47]Peter Silzer, SIL, personal communication.

[48]H. V. Klem, 1982.

[49]B. Grimes, ms.

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